The Pennyroyal Talks

Pennyroyal | THURSDAY OF APRIL 1861 | Editor John William

The Gun Has Fired – and With It, All Pretense of Lawful Dissent

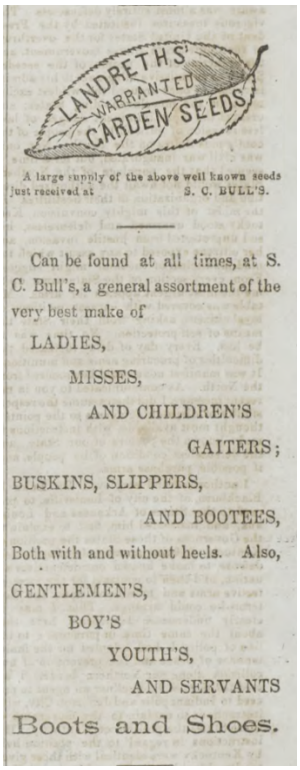
And thus, the Confederacy has taken action – action that only a true statesman would denounce as treasonable. The artillery shells that struck the flag and garrison of the United States at Fort Sumter were neither an act of constitutional right nor of protest and negotiation. They were acts of rebellion committed against a government which is not a league of voluntarily joined parties, but a compact formed by the people of America.

The theory of secessionists rests on the false doctrine of Calhoun, according to which every State has the right of nullification of a law or even withdrawal from the Union upon the basis of Calhoun's idea of a "concurrent majority." Don't believe any of Calhoun's arguments. It is evident from the Proclamation of Andrew Jackson that the Constitution of America does not form a league but rather establishes a government whose authority is based not upon the will of separate states, but of the collective will of the American people. In firing artillery shells upon the sovereign property and garrison of the government created by that constitution, the Confederacy launched an attack upon a republic that constitutes an organic element of that Constitution. Therefore, from this moment on, in this legislature, and for the purposes of our future policy, I consider it absolutely necessary to utilize all constitutional means available before resorting to any actions of a revolutionary nature. The Crittenden Amendments are suggested; a Peace Conference convenes in Washington. But none of these offers have been given an adequate consideration in addressing the complaints of the southern statesmen. There is no oppression so oppressive that it could excuse actions taken by the Confederacy.

True enough, I have expressed my disdain for the Republican administration and party and the fact that Lincoln did not win any of the slave states in the recent election. Nevertheless, let me repeat that it is wrong for those, who call themselves citizens of the American Union, to follow the example of Old Hickory, who stated that liberty and union are inseparable things. My discontent with the Lincoln administration is not an excuse for me – or for any other loyal citizen of Kentuc2ky – to fight against an armed rebellion, as a slave owner and a Pennsylvanian, I see nothing to be feared. However, since I am the son of the Pennyroyal and as such, I know what the fears of my fellow citizens are, I understand their desire to defend their way of life. Still, there is another way, and our institutions do not need to be protected by guns and cannons, but through the means of amendments, legislatures, courts, and petitions. If the Confederacy wishes to start a revolution, it has not justified itself.

Now, concerning the matter we are debating here. Although I have done my best to prevent supplying the rebel troops with provisions and ammunition, provided by the Louisville and Nashville railroad, what we are facing right now is the question of loyalty to the Union. I have read that there are voices in our midst which express concern that the fire-eaters of our society might lead us into something that we have not agreed upon. Thus, to respond to them: If you have the slightest doubts about the loyalty of the people of Kentucky toward the Union, then you have a very good illustration in the actions of the Confederacy. We do not owe anything to Lincoln, but we owe

comes our duty to show loyalty to the flag of Fort Sumter and the honor of our ancestors who fought at New Orleans.



FORT SUMTER - LICOLN AND DAVIS POSITIONS

An artillery attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, was the first shot of the Civil War, the moment which forever changed American history. This federal fort located in the Charleston harbor of South Carolina became the object of dispute due to the seven states' secession from the Union and the formation of the Confederate States of America. In March 1861, when there was already a military encirclement of the fort by the Confederates who demanded surrender, Major Robert Anderson refused to give up. On the early morning of April 12, Confederate batteries launched a thirty-four hour bombardment against Fort Sumter. Despite the impressive scale of this military engagement, the remarkable thing is that nobody died in it. Nevertheless, the attack sparked the mass enthusiasm of people and initiated further mobilization that was about to unfold in the course of four years of bloody warfare.

As for President Lincoln, the question of what to do regarding Fort Sumter became extremely complicated for him in terms of politics and constitutional issues. As soon as he came to power in March 1861, seven Southern states had already seceded from the Union. On the one hand, Lincoln felt obligated to keep the country together; on the other hand, he was striving to avoid military actions and hoped for some compromise or negotiation. At this point, Lincoln made a brilliant move – he decided to resupply Fort Sumter with supplies but not to reinforce it with troops. Such an idea turned out to be quite cunning: the initiative of attacking either the fort itself or the approaching ship supplying it would automatically be perceived as aggression against the USA both by Northern population and by foreign countries. Thus, Jefferson Davis ended up in the impossible situation – he had to either tolerate federal occupation of its territory or launch attacks.

Lincoln and Jefferson Davis had entirely different perceptions of the role and meaning of the mentioned fort for the future of America. While Lincoln regarded Fort Sumter as part of federal territory, Davis saw it as a provocation and a threat to Confederate territory. Indeed, the Confederate States of America considered themselves sovereign states that had a full right to secede from the Union. Moreover, from the perspective of Jefferson Davis, the United States of America had nothing to do with such seceded states because the Constitution of the country was a voluntary compact created by individual states which also gave them the right to withdraw from it in case their sovereignty was at stake. Thus, the Confederate States of America regarded any attempt of federal military actions against them as a violation of their rights and freedom.

Lincoln and Davis followed completely opposite ideas of constitutionalism which shaped their views on Fort Sumter's significance. First of all, while Davis insisted on the compact interpretation of the Constitution, Lincoln saw states as having no right to secede because it was the main threat to the existence of the US Government. That is why Lincoln tried to present his intentions to resupply the fort as a peaceful step and characterized the attack of the Confederacy as a mere obedience to the Constitution, and from it

act of aggression. Such a rhetoric worked perfectly well, since the North was firmly united behind Lincoln. For his part, Jefferson Davis was certain that he had a right to protect his nation from imperialist tendencies of Lincoln. However, it was his decision to fire the first gun that was absolutely destructive for the upper South.

As soon as Fort Sumter fell, both Lincoln and Jefferson Davis immediately took measures for the upcoming war. President Abraham Lincoln ordered the recruitment of 75,000 men to serve in the United States Army for three months for suppressing the rebellion. The call for volunteers was received enthusiastically throughout the North – patriotic crowds started gathering in different parts of the USA ready to defend the flag and the Constitution. Meanwhile, President Davis addressed Kentucky and Virginia to send soldiers for defending Confederates. He understood perfectly that the war would develop around Virginia and therefore Kentucky troops were extremely important.

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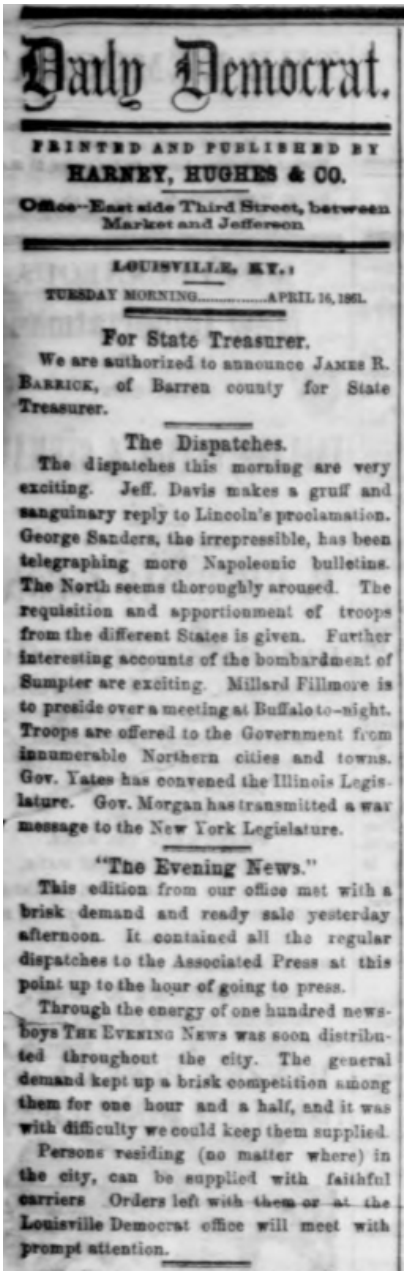
ILLUSTRATION OF THE ATTACK ON FORT SUMTER

Representation of Fort Sumter bombed on April 12th by Confederate troops.

"THE DISPATCHES"

The following is an excerpt from Daily Democrat, which address the reactions of President Lincoln and President Davis.



Daily Democrat.

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Office--East side Third Street, between Market and Jefferson

LOUISVILLE, KY.:
TUESDAY MORNING.....APRIL 16, 1861.

For State Treasurer.

We are authorized to announce JAMES R. BARRICK, of Barren county for State Treasurer.

The Dispatches.

The dispatches this morning are very exciting. Jeff. Davis makes a gruff and sanguinary reply to Lincoln's proclamation. George Sanders, the irrepressible, has been telegraphing more Napoleonic bulletins. The North seems thoroughly aroused. The requisition and apportionment of troops from the different States is given. Further interesting accounts of the bombardment of Sumpter are exciting. Millard Fillmore is to preside over a meeting at Buffalo to-night. Troops are offered to the Government from innumerable Northern cities and towns. Gov. Yates has convened the Illinois Legislature. Gov. Morgan has transmitted a war message to the New York Legislature.

"The Evening News."

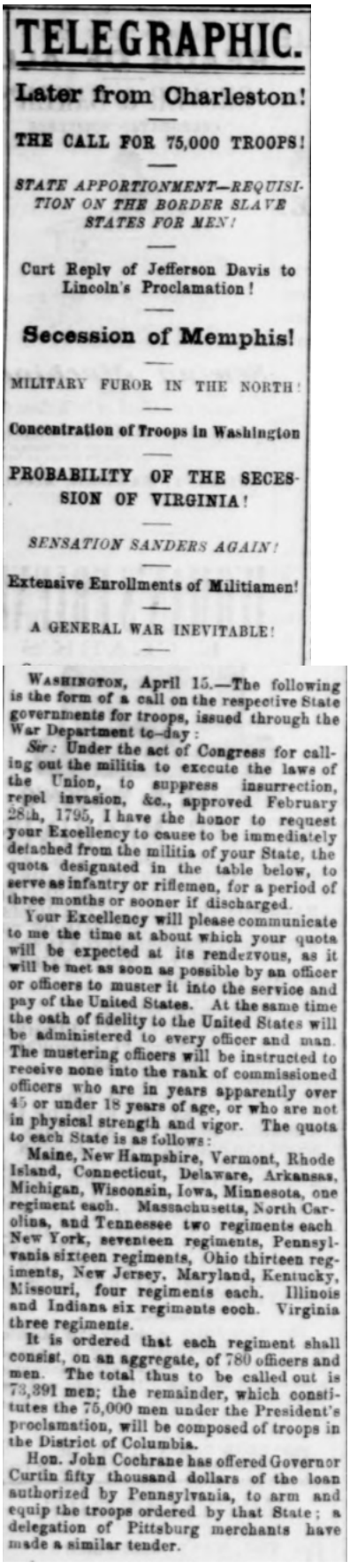
This edition from our office met with a brisk demand and ready sale yesterday afternoon. It contained all the regular dispatches to the Associated Press at this point up to the hour of going to press.

Through the energy of one hundred newsboys THE EVENING NEWS was soon distributed throughout the city. The general demand kept up a brisk competition among them for one hour and a half, and it was with difficulty we could keep them supplied.

Persons residing (no matter where) in the city, can be supplied with faithful carriers. Orders left with them or at the Louisville Democrat office will meet with prompt attention.

"THE CALL FOR 75,000 TROOPS"

The following excerpt is addressing the Lincoln's petition for 75,000 troops to fight against south (including beautiful Kentuckians).



TELEGRAPHIC.

Later from Charleston!

THE CALL FOR 75,000 TROOPS!

STATE APPORTIONMENT—REQUISITION ON THE BORDER SLAVE STATES FOR MEN!

Curt Reply of Jefferson Davis to Lincoln's Proclamation!

Secession of Memphis!

MILITARY FUROR IN THE NORTH!

Concentration of Troops in Washington

PROBABILITY OF THE SECESSION OF VIRGINIA!

SENSATION SANDERS AGAIN!

Extensive Enrollments of Militiamen!

A GENERAL WAR INEVITABLE!

WASHINGTON, April 15.—The following is the form of a call on the respective State governments for troops, issued through the War Department to-day:

Sir: Under the act of Congress for calling out the militia to execute the laws of the Union, to suppress insurrection, repel invasion, &c., approved February 28th, 1795, I have the honor to request your Excellency to cause to be immediately detached from the militia of your State, the quota designated in the table below, to serve as infantry or riflemen, for a period of three months or sooner if discharged.

Your Excellency will please communicate to me the time at about which your quota will be expected at its rendezvous, as it will be met as soon as possible by an officer or officers to muster it into the service and pay of the United States. At the same time the oath of fidelity to the United States will be administered to every officer and man. The mustering officers will be instructed to receive none into the rank of commissioned officers who are in years apparently over 45 or under 18 years of age, or who are not in physical strength and vigor. The quota to each State is as follows:

Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, Arkansas, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, one regiment each. Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Tennessee two regiments each New York, seventeen regiments, Pennsylvania sixteen regiments, Ohio thirteen regiments, New Jersey, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, four regiments each. Illinois and Indiana six regiments each. Virginia three regiments.

It is ordered that each regiment shall consist, on an aggregate, of 780 officers and men. The total thus to be called out is 73,391 men; the remainder, which constitutes the 75,000 men under the President's proclamation, will be composed of troops in the District of Columbia.

Hon. John Cochrane has offered Governor Curtin fifty thousand dollars of the loan authorized by Pennsylvania, to arm and equip the troops ordered by that State; a delegation of Pittsburg merchants have made a similar tender.

COLOPHON

IMAGES/ADVERTS:

1. Landreth's warranted garden seeds

(https://saalck-uky.primo.exlibrisgroup.com)

2. Coach Factory

(https://saalck-uky.primo.exlibrisgroup.com)

3. Illustration of Attack on Fort Sumter

(https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/1861-years-overview-american-civil-war-history)

EXCERPTS:

4. The Dispatches

(https://saalck-uky.primo.exlibrisgroup.com)

5. The Call for 75,000 Troops

(https://saalck-uky.primo.exlibrisgroup.com)